

Request for Assistance of Director of Land-Grant

EXHIBIT 1

Ambrose Moses III <amoses@centralstate.edu>

Mon 4/29/2024 5:11 PM

To: Morakinyo Kuti <mkuti@centralstate.edu>

Good afternoon, Dr. Kuti:

Can I get your assistance with an important matter?

On September 1, 2022, Eric Smith, Amber Twitty, and I met with you to talk about CED. During the meeting we talked about outreach, among a number of other topics. We shared with you some of the challenges we faced where certain individuals in management were preventing us from doing our jobs by restricting our ability to talk, meet, and engage with the community in building relationships, and developing opportunities to deliver our cooperative extension program activities.

You shared that you believe in people having the necessary resources and tools to do their jobs. To that end, you gave us the directive "You guys do all the options that you need to do. . . . That's your job."

Similarly, in a different meeting, other staff have shared with me how, in response to their requests for you to assist them in addressing management's efforts to restrict them from distributing helpful information to staff members, you directed that all information should be shared without any preconditions.

Well, we are once again in a situation where management is impeding our ability to do our job. This has gone on for several months and has now gotten to the point where I am being denied the opportunity to effectively do my job.

On February 2, 2024, Mark Rendleman, CED Program Leader, informed the CED Team about the Growing Equity Partnership Grant and identified it as a priority project for the CED Team. I immediately began to diligently pursue implementation of the project.

The problem is that Mr. Rendleman requires that we get his direct, written approval before engaging in any "outreach", "outreach efforts", or "CED activity". This has created a bottleneck as he will go for days, weeks, and even months without giving his approval or disapproval. Without his direct, written approval I am unable to effectively do my job.

I am asking your assistance and guidance because if I follow your September 1, 2022 directive of "You guys do all the options that you need to do. . . . That's your job", Mr. Rendleman and Dr. Alcinda Folck are likely to penalize me.

Here is my most recent communication with Mr. Rendleman that includes the relevant factual background:

TO: Mark Rendleman, CED Program Leader

FROM: Ambrose Moses III, Esq, Extension Educator, SW Region (Franklin County)

Date: April 28, 2024

RE: Proposal for New Farmer Business Education

(A program implementation and delivery utilizing the Growing Equity Partnership Grant)

Relevant Background re: Implementation of the Growing Equity Partnership Grant

February 2, 2024 – Rendleman canceled Weekly One-on-One Meeting with Moses.

February 2, 2024, the Rendleman as CED Program Leader issued a directive to the CED Team to implement the Growing Equity Partnership Grant that was recently awarded.

Moses, as a Statewide Extension Educator, was assigned to provide coverage for “Greater Columbus area & SE Region”

The following timetable was given for implementation:

- Commence your coordination with me, identifying proposed partners by **Friday, February 9, 2024**.
- Commence coordination to determine locations for education efforts by **Friday, March 1, 2024**.
- Determine dates for education efforts considering scheduled calendar events.
- Conduct recruiting of attendees and report back to Program Leader by **Friday, March 22, 2024**.

February 2, 2024 – Moses began reviewing and researching the assigned project. Moses prepared a Proposed Partner Plan for the Greater Columbus Area and the Southeast Region and commenced his coordination with Rendleman via email. Moses proposed 4 partners for the Greater Columbus Area. Moses proposed engaging with other CSU Extension colleagues in the Southeast Region to identify potential partners in that region. Moses received no timely reply from Rendleman.

February 6, 2024 – After conducting additional research and analysis of the project, Moses submitted an updated Proposed Partner Plan for the Greater Columbus Area and the Southeast Region. Moses asked Rendleman several preliminary questions concerning the project. Rendleman did not answer Moses’ questions. Moses again proposed 4 partners for the Greater Columbus Area. Moses proposed 2 partners for the Southeast Region in addition to engaging with other CSU Extension colleagues in the Southeast Region to identify potential partners in that region. Moses also asked if there is anything else that Rendleman required by the Friday, February 9, 2024 deadline. Moses received no timely reply from Rendleman.

February 6, 2024 – Rendleman canceled Weekly One-on-One Meeting with Moses. This would have been an opportunity to discuss the Growing Equity Partnership Grant and approval of Moses’ Proposed Partner Plan.

March 12, 2024 – Rendleman emailed and requested that Moses resend him the February 6, 2024 email with the Proposed Partner Plan for the Greater Columbus Area and the Southeast Region, “During our One-on-One discussion today, you referenced that you forwarded your proposal for the Growing Equity Partnership Grant to me in an email dated February 6, 2024. Please resend that email for my review. I am ready to review it and make my final determination.”

March 12, 2024 -- Moses resent the February 6, 2024 email to Rendleman as requested.

March 12, 2024 – After receiving the February 6, 2024 email again, Rendleman responded, “The funding through this grant is limited as I explained during our discussion today. The coverage for our related programing opportunities is divided throughout most of our regions in the state of Ohio. Ideally, and especially as a part of this first round of funding I would prefer that you reduce your number of proposed stakeholder organizations and others. No more than three curriculum offerings are preferred from each educator. There will be additional offerings throughout the course of the year and beyond.

Please revise your offering accordingly.”

March 15, 2024 – Moses revised and submitted an Updated Proposed Partner Plan for the Greater Columbus Area and the Southeast Region. This plan reduced the proposed number of partners from 4

to 2 in the Columbus Area. This plan proposed working with the ANR Educator in the Southeast Region to connect with producers and food business owners as a way to build upon the RSG!: Agribusiness series that Moses had just completed in that region. The plan also proposed three curriculums: Ready, Set, Grow! (RSG!: Entrepreneur Toolkit), Agribusiness Series curated by Eric Smith, and Money Smart for Small Business. Moses received no timely reply from Rendleman.

March 15, 2024 – Rendleman canceled Weekly One-on-One Meeting with Moses. This would have been an opportunity to discuss the Growing Equity Partnership Grant and approval of Moses' Proposed Partner Plan.

March 22, 2024 – Rendleman canceled Weekly One-on-One Meeting with Moses. This would have been an opportunity to discuss the Growing Equity Partnership Grant and approval of Moses' Proposed Partner Plan.

March 29, 2024 – Rendleman canceled Weekly One-on-One Meeting with Moses. This would have been an opportunity to discuss the Growing Equity Partnership Grant and approval of Moses' Proposed Partner Plan.

April 4, 2024 – Rendleman emailed the CED Team requesting "I need each of you to send to my attention the scope of your intentions (Stakeholder Engagements / Dates / Times / Locations / Attendee Expectations) regarding participation with the Growing Equity Partnership Grant. We will be using the New Farmer Education Curriculums refined by Eric Smith and Stephen Washington. A timeline was previously established for these requests, and those timelines remain in effect. Time is of the essence."

April 4, 2024 – Moses emailed Rendleman requesting guidance and clarification. Moses received no timely reply from Rendleman concerning his requests.

April 4, 2024 – Per Rendleman's April 4th request to the CED Team, Moses emailed Rendleman, "In addition to the email I sent a few moments ago, I have attached hereto and below the most recent documentation/information I have concerning the Growing Equity Partnership Grant. Again, to date, I am awaiting approval and clarification from you. Thank you."

April 5, 2024 – Rendleman canceled Weekly One-on-One Meeting with Moses. This would have been an opportunity to discuss the Growing Equity Partnership Grant and approval of Moses' Proposed Partner Plan.

April 10, 2024 – Moses emailed Rendleman, "Just following up with you, again, concerning my requests for approval and clarification concerning the Growing Equity Partnership Grant. Please advise."

April 10, 2024 – Rendleman replied to Moses, "The curriculum is already defined for this Growing Equity Partnership education effort. Coordinate with Eric and Stephen to access that curriculum. No curriculum deviations will be approved.

Focus your outreach efforts on the Franklin County, Ohio space. We will capture the Southeast Region later.

I still need locations, dates, and times to be disclosed to me.

Forward the requested documentation and a final approval decision will be made."

PROJECT CHANGE - Rendleman's first notification that he changed the territorial coverage area assigned to Moses. This was the first notification that Rendleman gave to Moses that the coverage area assigned on February 2, 2024 had been changed from the "Greater Columbus Area and the Southeast Region" to "Franklin County, Ohio".

PROJECT CHANGE - Rendleman's statement that he "still" needed locations, dates, and times to be disclosed to him was false, and at best, disingenuous because Moses had submitted Proposed Partner Plans to Rendleman on February 2nd, February 6th, and March 15th. Between March 15, 2024 and April 10, 2024, Rendleman, while in possession of Moses' March 15th Proposed Partner Plan, canceled four (4) one-on-one meetings with Moses and did not reschedule them. This would have been an opportunity to discuss the Growing Equity Partnership Grant and Rendleman's approval of Moses' Proposed Partner Plan, and more. Thus, to say that he "still" needs locations, dates, and times to be disclosed to him is disingenuous. Rendleman requires direct approval, in writing, of all outreach efforts and CED activity.

April 11, 2024 – Moses responded to Rendleman's April 10th email by providing context and requesting clarification.

April 12, 2024 – Rendleman canceled Weekly One-on-One Meeting with Moses. This would have been an opportunity to discuss the Growing Equity Partnership Grant and approval of Moses' Proposed Partner Plan.

April 15, 2024 – Rendleman emailed Moses, "I need you to revise your proposal for the Growing Equity Partnership Grant. I have requested some modifications. Forward your adjustments so that I can consider approval. Time is of the essence."

April 15, 2024 – Moses replied to Rendleman, "I submitted a revised Proposed Partner Plan to you on March 15, 2024 and have not received a response from you concerning the same."

There are also other requests for clarification in my email dated April 11, 2024 that you have not answered. Thank you."

April 18, 2024 – Rendleman canceled Weekly One-on-One Meeting with Moses. This would have been an opportunity to discuss the Growing Equity Partnership Grant and approval of Moses' Proposed Partner Plan.

April 24, 2024 – Rendleman replied to Moses' email dated April 4, 2024. "Ambrose, The scope of territorial coverage for you regarding the Growing Equity Partnership Grant has been redefined to focus on Franklin County."

Refer to the email from me to you dated, April 10, 2024. In that email I stated, "Focus your outreach efforts on the Franklin County, Ohio space. We will capture the Southeast Region later."

Forward your modified proposal to my attention so that we can get you started. I'm prepared to review that proposal and if it lines up with the defined scope, approval will be provided.

Submit your revised Growing Equity Partnership proposal, based on coverage in Franklin county.

Your proposal should at a minimum include:

- Identify you proposed partner(s) in Franklin County, Ohio.
- Your location(s) for education efforts.
- Your date(s) for education efforts.

- Evidence that you are conducting recruiting effort for attendees.

*****I need this information submitted to my attention by Friday, May 3, 2024.****

PROJECT CHANGE-This was Rendleman's first notification that he changed the structure of the implementation plan to require a "Growing Equity Partnership proposal". This was the first notification that Rendleman gave to Moses that he now wanted a "Growing Equity Partnership proposal". To date, Rendleman has not approved the Proposed Partner Plan submitted by Moses.

Approved partners are required before one can determine and coordinate locations and dates of the group instruction and individual instruction extension education activities.

PROJECT CHANGE-This was Rendleman's first notification that he changed the deliverables to include the requirement that Moses provide "evidence that you are conducting recruiting effort for attendees." How is an extension educator supposed to effectively recruit attendees for program activity sessions that Rendleman has not approved, dates and locations that Rendleman has not approved, and with partners that Rendleman has not approved?

Rendleman's requests and requirements are contradictory and unclear. What is the current scope of the project? What is the current timetable of the project? Is prior approval from Rendleman required or not? If so, what is Rendleman approving?

April 28, 2024 – Below is Moses' "Growing Equity Partnership Proposal" (incorporating therein the Updated Proposed Partner Plan originally submitted on February 2, 2024).

Executive Summary:

New Farmer Business Education is a targeted extension education initiative designed to empower agricultural entrepreneurs in Franklin County with the necessary tools to start and sustain successful urban agriculture businesses. This program will be implemented and delivered utilizing the **Growing Equity Partnership Grant**. The implementation and delivery of this program also involves the collaboration with key local partners, ensuring it is deeply integrated with community needs and strengths.

Project Overview:

- **Project Name:** New Farmer Business Education
- **Location:** Franklin County, Ohio
- **Format:** Virtual and/or In-Person
- **Sessions:** 6 sessions, beginning in May 6, 2024
- **Lead Presenter:** Ambrose Moses III

Objectives:

1. Provide actionable education tailored to the nuances of urban agricultural business.
2. Foster a supportive network among urban agricultural entrepreneurs.
3. Enhance the economic impact of urban agriculture through improved business practices.

Session Details:

1. **Business Mission Vision Values** - Equip entrepreneurs to define and articulate their business's core principles.
2. **Business Structures** - Guide choices on the appropriate legal structure for stability and growth.
3. **Business Planning** - Facilitate strategic planning for sustainability and profitability.
4. **Business Marketing** - Develop skills for effective marketing and customer engagement.
5. **Business Records and Financials** - Teach financial literacy and management for business health.
6. **Business Operations and Resources** - Optimize operational efficiency and resource utilization.

Proposed Partners and Community Involvement:

The three (3) core proposed partners will be the Urban Farmers Coalition, Ohio Ecological Food and Farm Association (OEFFA), and We Grow NES. This proposed collaboration of partners leverages community resources for comprehensive support, including venue selection, participant recruitment, and widespread promotional efforts.

Location(s) of Extension Education Activities:

The extension education activities, e.g. group and/or individual instruction, can be delivered in-person or via an online platform like Microsoft Teams or Zoom. The project partners will help determine which delivery format is better for their constituents. Moses is able to facilitate both in-person and/or online.

Dates of Extension Education Activities:

Moses has tentatively selected May 6, 2024 as a beginning date. However, Rendleman has not yet approved the proposed partners from February 2nd, February 6th, March 15th, or April 28th. As a result, it is difficult to coordinate dates with proposed partners when they have not yet been approved to be actual partners on the project. Once partners are approved, there will be a need for a reasonable time to schedule and promote the program activities.

Recruitment of Participants for the Program:

Moses has engaged with the Urban Farmers Coalition, OEFFA, and We Grow NES and discussed the program as a helpful resource to their members constituents. Since Rendleman has not provided pre-approval to Moses for the 1) Proposed Partners, 2) Location(s), or 3) dates and times, Moses has refrained from promising or building program delivery expectations with the proposed partners or their constituents.

Expected Outcomes:

- Participants will acquire essential knowledge and skills in urban agribusiness.
- Establishment and growth of sustainable urban agriculture enterprises.
- Strengthened community ties and economic development within the urban agriculture sector.

Budget and Funding:

Details to be provided upon confirmation of partner contributions and grant allocations, ensuring all resources are appropriately leveraged to maximize program impact.

Conclusion:

The New Farmer Business Education series is poised to make a significant impact in Franklin County, embodying Central State University's mission of fostering community growth through strategic education and collaboration. Your approval and support are crucial for moving this promising initiative forward.

Program Implementation and Delivery Schedule:

Cultivate: An Urban Ag Startup & Success Series					
Business Technical Assistance (BTA)			New Farmer Business Education - Cohort 1 (2024) Location: Columbus (Franklin County)		
Session	Topic	Description	Lead Presenter	Date	Time
1	Business Mission Vision Values	Define core values, mission, and vision for business clarity.	Ambrose	5/6/2024	12 p – 1:30 p
2	Business Structures	Explore legal frameworks and structures for business formation.	Ambrose	TBD	12 p – 1:30 p
3	Business Planning	Strategic planning for sustainable business growth and success.	Ambrose	TBD	12 p – 1:30 p
4	Business Marketing	Effective marketing strategies to boost business visibility and sales.	Ambrose	TBD	12 p – 1:30 p
5	Business Records and Financials	Manage essential financial records and understand financial statements.	Ambrose	TBD	12 p – 1:30 p
6	Business Operations and Resources	Optimize business operations and effectively utilize resources.	Ambrose	TBD	12 p – 1:30 p
				As of 04/24/24 @ 8:00 PM	

Virtual Training Sessions: Via Microsoft Teams

and/or

In-Person Training Sessions: at TBD

Your assistance is greatly appreciated. Thank you.

Ambrose Moses III

Ambrose Moses III, Esq.

Extension Educator

Community & Economic Development

Central State University Extension

E.J. Emery Hall | 1400 Brush Row Road | Wilberforce, OH 45384

amoses@CentralState.edu | www.CentralState.edu/csuextension